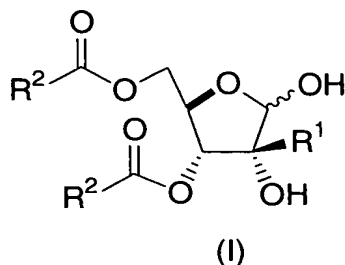
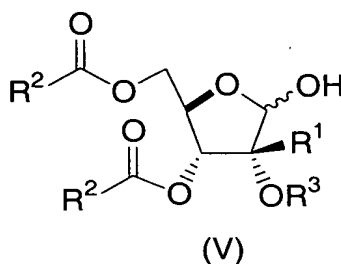


## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A process for preparing a compound of structural formula I:

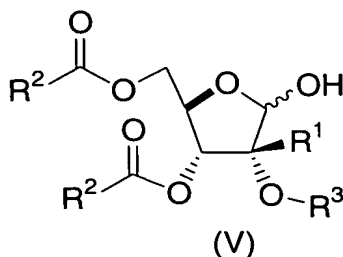


- 5 wherein  $\text{R}^1$  is  $\text{C}_2\text{-4}$  alkenyl,  $\text{C}_2\text{-4}$  alkynyl, or  $\text{C}_1\text{-6}$  alkyl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from fluorine, hydroxy, amino, mercapto,  $\text{C}_1\text{-3}$  alkoxy, and  $\text{C}_1\text{-3}$  alkylthio; and  
 $\text{R}^2$  is  $\text{C}_1\text{-6}$  alkyl or aryl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from methoxy, methyl, and fluorine;  
 10 comprising the step of cleaving the  $\text{R}^3$  protecting group in a compound of structural formula V:

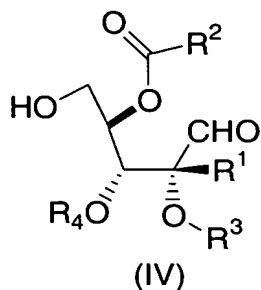


wherein  $\text{R}^3$  represents benzyl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from methyl, methoxy, halogen, and nitro.

- 15 2. The process of Claim 1 additionally comprising the step of producing a compound of structural formula V:



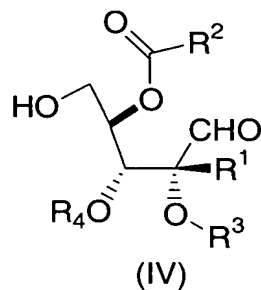
by treating a compound of structural formula IV:



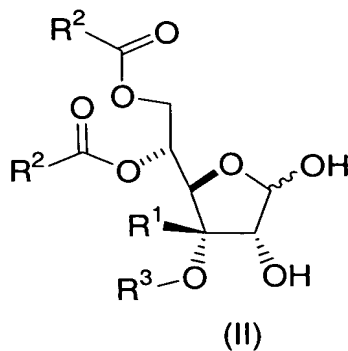
wherein R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen or formyl;  
with base in an organic solvent.

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3. The process of Claim 2 additionally comprising the step of producing a compound of structural formula IV:

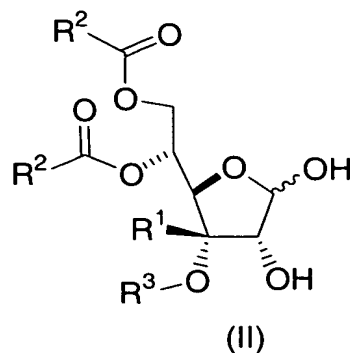


by oxidative cleavage of a compound of structural formula II:

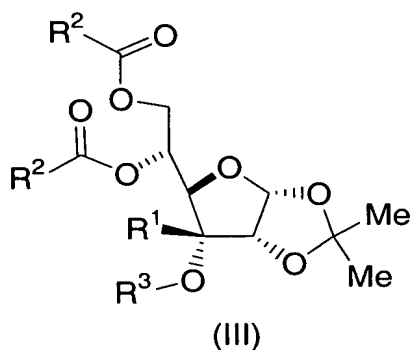


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4. The process of Claim 3 additionally comprising the step of producing a compound of structural formula II:



by treating a compound of structural formula III:



with aqueous acid in an organic solvent.

5

5. The process of Claim 1 wherein R<sup>1</sup> is methyl.

6. The process of Claim 5 wherein R<sup>3</sup> is benzyl.

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7. The process of Claim 6 wherein R<sup>2</sup> is phenyl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from methoxy, methyl, and fluorine.

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8. The process of Claim 1 wherein R<sup>1</sup> is methyl, R<sup>3</sup> is benzyl, and R<sup>2</sup> is phenyl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from methoxy, methyl, and fluorine.

9. The process of Claim 8 wherein R<sup>2</sup> is 4-methylphenyl.

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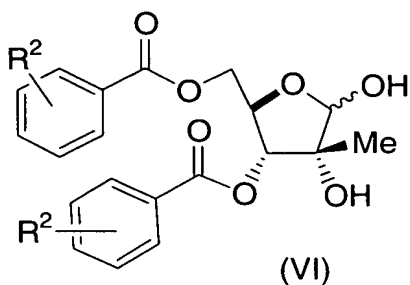
10. The process of Claim 1 wherein said R<sup>3</sup> protecting group is cleaved by catalytic hydrogenolysis.

11. The process of Claim 2 wherein said base is diisopropylamine.

12. The process of Claim 3 wherein said oxidative cleavage is carried out with  
5 periodic acid.

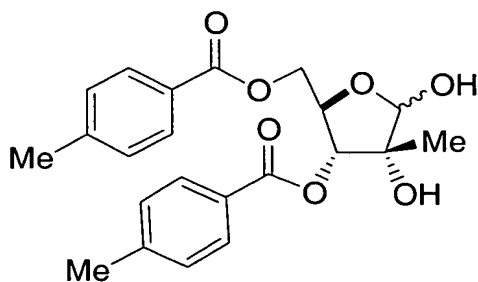
13. The process of Claim 4 wherein said aqueous acid is aqueous  
tetrafluoroboric acid or aqueous perchloric acid.

10 14. A compound of structural formula VI:

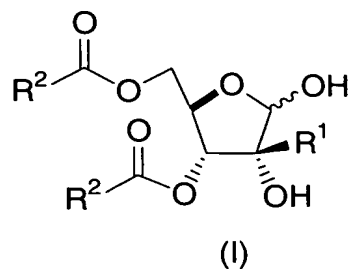


wherein R<sup>2</sup> is hydrogen, methoxy, methyl, or fluorine.

15. The compound of Claim 14 which is

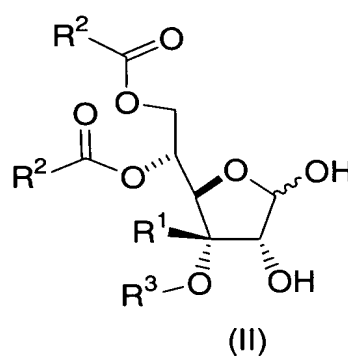


16. A process for preparing a compound of structural formula I:

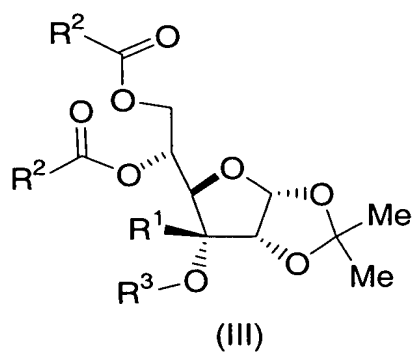


comprising the steps of:

(a) producing a compound of structural formula II:

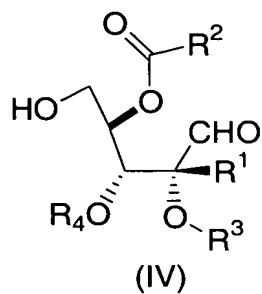


- 5 wherein R<sup>3</sup> represents benzyl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from methyl, methoxy, halogen, and nitro;  
by treating a compound of structural formula III:



with aqueous acid in an organic solvent;

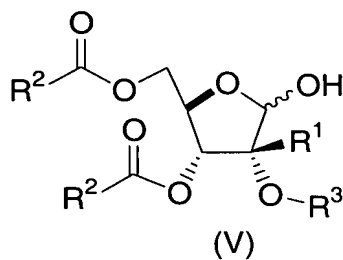
- 10 (b) producing a compound of structural formula IV:



wherein  $R^4$  is hydrogen or formyl;

by oxidative cleavage of the compound of structural formula II;

(c) producing a compound of structural formula V:



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by treating a compound of structural formula IV with base in an organic solvent; and

(d) cleaving the  $R^3$  protecting group in a compound of structural formula V.